

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 L-01 PRS-01

DHA-02 INR-05 INRE-00 SSO-00 /035 W
----- 039809

O P 121345Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7488

INFO AMCONSUL TANGIER PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LOME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COTONOU 1196

LIMDIS

FOR AF/W

ALSO PASS PEACE CORPS FOR PHILIPS

TANGIER FOR TORIAN AND PASELA

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, DM, US

SUBJ: ROUND UP OF PEACE CORPS TRAINERS

REF A. COTONU 1182 B. STATE 189819

SUMMARY: DAHOMEAN LANGUAGE COORDINATORS, PADONOU AND SELIDJI, WERE RELEASED AUG 10. BELIEVE ROUND-UP AND DETENTION WERE UNILATERAL ACTION BY ACTING MIN OF INTERIOR AND SECURITY, LT MARTIN AZONHIHO, WHO PERSONALLY INTERROGATED COORDINATORS AND ACCUSED THEM OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. DO NOT BELIEVE PC PROGRAM IN JEOPARDY. ATTEMPTING OBTAIN OFFICIAL ASSURANCES FROM APPROPRIATE MINISTRIES.

1. THE TWO DAHOMEAN LANGUAGE COORDINATORS FOR THE PC LANGUAGE TEACHERS WORKSHOP, JEAN PADONOU AND EUGENE SELIJDJ, WERE RELEASED FROM DETENTION AT 1800 AUG 10. DUE TO THEIR FATIGUE AND THE PRESENCE OF OTHER WORKSHOP TEACHERS, PCD UNABLE TO
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GET ANY DETAILED INFORMATION UNTIL 1900 AUG 11.

2. ON AUG 8, PADONOU AND SELIDJI WERE BROUGHT BEFORE THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION AND ACTING MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AND SECURITY, LT MARTIN DOHOU AZONHIHO, WHO BERATED THEM FOR WORKING FOR THE IMPERIALISTS. HE ACCUSED SELIDJI OF BEING AN AGENT OF THE CIA AND PADONOU, AN EMPLOYEE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, OF ASSISTING HIM IN HIS ACTIVITIES. THE MINISTER THREATENED THAT IF THEY MADE THE SLIGHTEST ERROR THEY WOULD BE TAKEN AND SHOT WITHOUT ANY QUESTIONS BEING ASKED. THEY WERE TOLD THEY WERE NOW BEING WATCHED VERY CAREFULLY. THE COORDINATORS CAME OUT OF THE MEETING VERY FRIGHTENED. THE ABOVE INFORMATION WAS GIVEN TO THE PCD IN CONFIDENCE AND ANY VIOLATION OF THE CONFIDENCE COULD RESULT IN RECRIMINATION.

3. THE TWO COORDINATORS BELIEVE THAT THE SOURCE OF THE INFORMATION WHICH RESULTED IN THE ROUND-UP IS ONE OF THE LANGUAGE TEACHER CANDIDATES, A CURRENT GIRL FRIEND OF AZONHIHO, WHO WAS SEEN WITH HIM THE DAY BEFORE THE ROUND-UP. THIS OPINION IS BASED ON THE MINISTER'S REFERENCE TO MINUTE DETAILS OF ACTIONS WHICH OCCURRED ONLY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS. THIS IS SIMILARLY THE OPINION OF THE OTHER LANGUAGE TEACHERS.

4. FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH THE TWO LANGUAGE COORDINATORS, AZONHIHO MET WITH THE STAFF OF THE NATIONAL RADIO STATION ON ANOTHER MATTER. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE AT THE RADIO, THE MINISTER BROUGHT UP THE INCIDENT AS AN ASIDE, CITING THE TRAINING PROGRAM AS AN ATTEMPT TO SUBVERT THE REVOLUTION. HE SAID THAT THE WORKSHOP WAS NOT FOR FRENCH-LANGUAGE TRAINING, AS THE AMERICANS CLAIM, BUT FOR BRAIN-WASHING. ACCORDINGLY, HE HAD ORDERED EVERYONE ROUNDED UP AND BROUGHT IN FOR SOME REVOLUTIONARY-STYLE IDEOLOGICAL TRAINING. AZONHIHO ALSO CITED AS "PROOF" THAT THE WORKSHOP WAS A SCHOOL FOR SUBVERSION THE FACT THAT THE TEACHERS ARE BEING PAID 10,000 CFA (\$50) PER WEEK. HE RECOUNTED A COMPLETELY FABRICATED AND ILLOGICAL STORY OF HOW HE HAD CALLED IN THE AMERICAN "EMBASSY", WHICH HAD WANTED TO CANCEL THE WORKSHOP, AND PERSONALLY ORDERED THE EMBASSY TO CONTINUE THE WORKSHOP.

5. OUR SAME SOURCE WAS TOLD BY AN OFFICIAL OF THE INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTRY THAT AZONHIHO TOOK THE MATTER TO PRES KEREKOU, WHO REPORTEDLY REJECTED THE MINISTER'S ASSERTIONS OF SUBVERSION OUT OF HAND. KEREKOU TOLD AZONHIHO THAT IF THE US WISHED TO CONDUCT SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES, IT WOULD NOT BE SO OPEN ABOUT IT. KEREKOU ORDERED AZONHIHO TO ALLOW THE WORKSHOP TO CONTINUE.

6. COMMENT: WHILE WE BELIEVE WE MUST FOLLOW UP WITH APPROP-

RIATE MINISTERS (I.E. FORMIN AND THOSE INVOLVED WITH THIS PC PROGRAM), IN ORDER TO BE ASSURED THAT THE INCIDENT IS NOT REPEATED AND, IF POSSIBLE, THAT THE FUTURE OF PC IN DAHOMEY IS NOT IN JEOPARDY, SEVERAL FACTORS MITIGATE AGAINST A STRONG OFFICIAL PROTEST.
CHESHES

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED PEACE CORPS.

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7. FIRST IS OUR BELIEF THAT AZONHIHO WAS ACTING ON HIS OWN. THE REASONS SUPPORTING THIS BELIEF ARE: A) THE ORDER FOR THE ROUND-UP AND SUBSEQUENT ORDERS FOR DETENTION CAME OUT OF THE MIN OF INTERIOR; B) ALL OTHER MINISTRIES WHEN CONTACTED APPEARED TO BE RESPONDING TO THE AFFAIR RATHER THAN PARTICIPATING IN IT; C) THE TWO THEORIES OF CAUSE RELATED ONLY TO THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR HIMSELF (A FRIEND OF HIS SEEKING VENGEANCE AGAINST THE COORDINATORS AND/OR HIS SEEKING VENGEANCE AGAINST THE COORDINATORS AND/OR HIS GIRL FRIEND'S LOOSE TONGUE); D) ALL OF THE FOLLOW-UP HAS BEEN COORDINATED THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, AND E) HE IS THE ONLY MINISTER WHO HAS THUS FAR INVOLVED HIMSELF DIRECTLY WITH THE MATTER.

8. IF THE REPORT ABOUT THE KEREKOU REACTION IS TRUE, IT IS REASSURING. AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY (SEE COTONOU 1012), A NEW ATMOSPHERE OF CORDIALITY IN US-DAHOMEAN RELATIONS HAS EX-

ISTED FOR THE LAST SIX WEEKS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT BY HIS
UNILATERAL ACTION, AZONHIHO MAY HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO
REVERSE THE TREND.

9. WE HAVE REASON TO SUSPECT THAT THE INCIDENT MAY HAVE A
CONNECTION WITH A POWER PLAY BY AZONHIHO. THERE ARE A NUMBER
OF REPORTS OF AN IMPENDING CABINET SHAKE-UP, ALL OF WHICH
INDICATE THAT FORNMIN ALLADAYE, IS IN A VERY SHAKY POSITION.
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WHEN THE CHARGE AND PCD MET WITH OFFICIALS OF THE INFOR-
MATION MINISTRY AND SURETE NATIONALE (SEE PARA 5 REFTEL, A)
IT APPEARED THAT THESE OFFICIALS WERE GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY
TO PRECIPITATE A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE
FOREIGN MINISTRY. IN EITHER THIS OR THE SCENARIO IS PARA 8
ABOVE, WE DO NOT WISH TO PLAY INTO AZONHIHO'S HANDS.
FURTHERMORE, UNLESS WE ARE WILLING TO FURTHER JEOPARDIZE THE
PEACE CORPS' LANGUAGE COORDINATORS OR OUR OTHER SOURCE, WE
CANNOT CITE AZONHIHO'S SPECIFIC CHARGES THAT THE COORDINATORS
WERE INVOLVED IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN ANY PROTEST.

10. THEREFORE, WE DO NOT INTEND LODGE A FORMAL PROTEST. IN-
STEAD THE CHARGE IS REQUESTING APPOINTMENT WITH FORNMIN
ALLADAYE TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION AND ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN HIS
ASSURANCE THAT THERE WILL BE NO FUTURE HARASSMENT. PCD IS
ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT FOR WHOM THE NEW VOLUNTEERS WILL BE WORKING, TO
DISCUSS THE INCIDENT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE TRAINING WORKSHOP,
AND, BY IMPLICATION, ON THE WHOLE PROGRAM. THE PURPOSE OF THESE
DISCUSSIONS IS TO ASSESS THE NEAR TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR THE
NEW PCV GROUP DUE TO ARRIVE AUG 21. IT IS HOPED TO OBTAIN
THE ATTENDANCE AT THE WORKSHOP OF AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH
LEVEL DAHOMEAN OFFICIAL TO REASSURE THE LANGUAGE TEACHERS
AND RAISE MORALE. WISH EMPHASIZE THAT APART FROM THIS INCI-
DENT THERE IS NO OTHER EVIDENCE OF ANY INTENT ON PART OF
DAHOMAN GOVT TO HARASS PC PROGRAM. UP TO THE TIME OF THIS
INCIDENT, PLANS FOR TRAINING AND PLACEMENT OF VOLS HAD BEEN
PROCEEDING MOST SATISFACTORILY.
CHESHES

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED PEACE CORPS.

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